



Chemawa leases this location along I-5 to billboard companies. It is school property.



The Christmas tree farm on Chemawa grounds.

FOCUS: Paint Ball at Chemawa

Proceeds from private enterprises on leased Indian Trust land at Chemawa Indian School could directly benefit student activity.

Several years ago, direct funding for student after-school activities at the Bureau-operated Chemawa Indian School in Oregon was lost when the school's Intensive Residential Guidance account was rolled into the ISEP formula.

Yet, the school has been generating about \$90,000 a year by leasing its land for a Christmas tree farm, for several billboards along I-5, which borders the campus, and for a cell phone tower site. The cell phone equipment had been attached to the OFMC-funded water tower serving the campus. When OFMC replaced that water tower recently, the school leased a separate site to the cell phone company for its tower.

Meanwhile, the school was generating about \$20,000 annually by receiving a percentage of revenues from a paint ball challenge course set up on school grounds. However, due to liability issues, the paint ball enterprise was suspended.

The funds generated at Chemawa through the leases have been deposited directly into the U.S. Treasury, but BIE officials are now working to establish budget authority to allow the funds to be available for use by the Bureau-operated school, which would then steer the income to a student activity account.

"We would like the funds to go directly back to the students," said Seattle Education Line Officer Jon Claymore. "Like other Bureau-operated boarding schools, our students need after-school activities. In some cases, the students even need clothing, which we could buy with these funds."

As for O&M funding for the school, the proposed budget authority states that the income would not "allow for the diminishment of, or otherwise affect, the appropriation of funds to the budget accounts for the operation and maintenance of any Bureau-operated school."

OFMC Deputy Director Emerson Eskeets said the O&M funding formula used to calculate how much money Chemawa receives for building and grounds maintenance likely would not be impacted by Chemawa leasing some of its land for cell towers, billboards or tree farms.